

Chief, ICAPS

7 March 1949

Assistant Director for Operations

Central Translation Service

1. Attached are our proposals on the above subject, which may be used as agenda for the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Central Translation if you concur. You will note that they are drafted for your signature.

2. As a result of a discussion with the Chief, Foreign Documents Branch, on the differentiation between "strict translation" and the proposed "exploitation" of foreign documents, this Office believes that a new committee should be formed at a lower working level to consider the problems mentioned in Para. 3 and 4 of the attached. Collection and exploitation activities in the field of foreign documents are not usually handled by the same branches or units in the IAC agencies as handle agency translation facilities. Any recommendations made by such a new committee would naturally be submitted to ICAPS for inter-agency discussion on a higher level before presentation to the Standing Committee of the IAC.

GEORGE G. CAREY

Encl: 1

Memo 7 Mar 49 to Ad Hoc Comm. on Central Translations
fr Chief, ICAPS

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Ad Hoc Committee on Central Translations

Chief, ICAPS

Central Service and Coordination of Translation

1. The recommendations of the IAC agencies on this subject may be split into two major categories. The first deals with translation *per se*. Four of the five agencies, namely State, Army, Navy and Air, recommend maintenance of individual facilities with a high degree of coordination. The arguments for this may be summarized as follows:

a. The problem of establishing inter-agency priorities in a central bureau for each agency's priority material is too complicated. More satisfactory results can be accomplished through coordination. (Army, Air)

b. Material of unique interest for a single agency should be processed by that agency and then made available to other agencies. (Army, Navy)

c. By coordinating and utilizing existing services, additional personnel otherwise required to give full service needed by the intelligence agencies may be considerably reduced. (State)

d. Responsibilities within several agencies for the translation of other than intelligence information requires the maintenance of separate translation facilities. (Army, Navy)

e. The cost of establishment and maintenance of a central bureau would be excessive. (Army)

f. The close cooperation between the analyst and the translator for technical translations of specialized service interest could not be maintained, resulting in decrease in overall efficiency. (Army)

g. The same results can be attained through cooperation and coordination if measures are taken by the IAC agencies to insure that all translations made within their organizations be disseminated by the originating agency itself, or by furnishing a copy to CIA for dissemination.

2. a. It is evident from the almost unanimous recommendations of the IAC agencies that existing service translation facilities must be maintained for translation of priority and unique service-interest material. They must also be maintained for the translation of other than intelligence material.

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b. It is further evident that coordination and close cooperation is needed to reduce duplication to a minimum and to effect the dissemination of translations to each of the interested agencies. It is believed that this could be accomplished by maintenance of a central translation file of intelligence material and the periodic dissemination of a consolidated list of translations completed and available from each of the agencies.

c. This would require cooperation on the part of each agency in submitting information as to translations completed and in process. Such a central file must contain information on translations in process so that duplication and unnecessary expenditures may be eliminated all along the line insofar as possible. Such a file could thus be maintained as a service for the agencies in helping them keep the translation costs to a minimum and in informing them of translations already made and available. Such a file has already been started by the Foreign Documents Branch as a step toward helping the IAC agencies, and, if such a service is recognized, it is believed that it could be easily expanded to provide the coordinating service outlined. Each of the agencies is further concerned with the dissemination of translations resulting from its own facilities. However, the recommendations on this point are widely divergent. Army recommends agency dissemination to be accomplished by an increase in clerical assistance within the respective translation sections. State Department has noted that translations should be disseminated by the originating agency or by a copy to CIA for complete dissemination. Air has recommended that the central agency under discussion possess the necessary facilities with which to supply all requests for copies of untranslated or translated documents to the IAC agencies. It is recognized that the reproduction and dissemination facilities of each of the agencies differ and that also some would prefer to disseminate directly their own translations. It is, therefore, believed that, if all the agencies make their translations of intelligence material available, the dissemination problem can be met through close cooperation and the issuance of such translations either by the originating agency itself or by the central agency, with due notation of what agency has accomplished the translation.

3. The second category of recommendations deals with exploitation. It is recognized by a majority of the services that the problems involved in the processing of foreign language materials can be only partially answered by coordination of the existing translation services. Thus, the second part of the recommendations concern the exploitation of foreign language materials aside from strict translation. The recommendations on this point may be summarized as follows:

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a. Central exploitation of foreign language periodicals and newspapers is necessary. (Navy)

b. A central service is needed to provide all the IAC agencies with a complete coverage of all untranslated intelligence documents less those in immediate or urgent demand by one of the services. (Air)

c. Steps should be taken on a country by country basis for coordinated collection exploitation and dissemination of publications of intelligence value along the lines of the efforts which have been made with respect to Soviet and Yugoslav publications. (State)

d. All agencies should provide necessary available materials for processing by such a central service. (Navy, Air)

e. As Foreign Documents Branch is now performing some of the needed service envisaged it should be strengthened so as to fill the gap between the existing and needed services. (State, Navy)

f. A group should be appointed to work with the Research and Development Board or other non-IAC agencies attempting to solve the translation problem on an overall Government-wide basis and to make recommendations to the IAC as to the participation of the IAC in any proposed solution. (State, Navy)

4. Beyond the field of strict translation, it is thus recommended by a majority of the IAC agencies that a common service of exploitation (collection, screening and processing of foreign language documents) is both desirable and necessary. Such a service is a complex one and deserves careful consideration in order to meet most efficiently the needs of all agencies served. It should be surveyed with the cooperation of the interested agencies in order that the capabilities and limitations of existing facilities may be thoroughly understood and practical recommendations may be made for the most economical use and augmentation of those facilities. Such a survey could best be made by a purely working-level ad hoc committee composed of representatives of the collection units of the IAC agencies, under the chairmanship of the Chief, Foreign Documents Branch, OO, CIA.

5. Having determined that a Central Translation Bureau is not desirable, it is recommended that the Committee approve the following:

a. Maintenance of individual agency translation sections.

b. Coordination by CIA of translation work accomplished by such sections.

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c. Establishment of a new committee, to be designated the "Committee on Exploitation of Foreign Language Documents," to study the problems outlined in paragraphs 3 and 4, above, and to make recommendations through normal channels to the Standing Committee of the IAC.

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